

# SARAH MADDEN



Photo courtesy of Mark Olencki

*Wofford College*

## **What was your riding experience before joining IHSA?**

I rode off and on as a child, mostly Western and in rodeo arenas or on trails. When I truly started lessons as a teenager, it was in saddle seat. Throughout high school I did mostly trail riding with my Saddlebred mare, Dancer, before joining IHSA. I was pursuing certification as a PATH International therapeutic riding instructor at the time, and while student teaching at my local center, I was also helping school the horses to help them best do their jobs.

## How did you get involved with IHSA?

I was one of the founding members at Wofford. The team was established my sophomore year by two of my classmates, and I was in the first class of Wofford IHSA alumni. I had only had three hunt seat lessons before our first competition!

## Describe your experience competing on the team.

I loved being on a team, traveling to competitions and making friends both on and outside our team. IHSA took me from a flat rider only to jumping, and it taught me to be very comfortable riding unfamiliar horses, which only bettered my ability to teach my students. Some of my favorite memories from college are tied to the team and our travels, and I'm so glad I joined.



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## What do you think was most valuable about the experience? Do you keep in touch with any of your IHSA teammates/coaches?

Helping start a team and growing its recognition in the Wofford community and to prospective members was my first experience with sports marketing and PR, in a sense. I ran the social media accounts and wrote articles for both the campus newspaper and the college's quarterly magazine. I still live near my alma mater and the team, so I was able to attend the first show that Wofford co-hosted, which was a really proud moment for me as an alum.

## Tell us about your life now.

After graduating May of 2017, I interned at Tryon Resort and Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC), joining soon after as a PR & Marketing Coordinator, so my first year was spent preparing for hosting the FEI World Equestrian Games™ Tryon 2018, which was an experience of a lifetime. I do everything from rider interviews to content creation and advertising –every day is different and the knowledge I've gained is indescribable. I love living in Western North Carolina and helping to grow equestrian sport, especially since it was something I didn't have much access to when I was young. In addition to my horse Dancer, I have a three-legged dog named Piper who loves coming to work with me sometimes!



Photo courtesy of Madison Ibach

